The #1 Foot Exercise to Increase Foot Strength, Improve Balance & Reduce Falls with Dr Emily Transcript

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Toe Flexor Strength and Balance

Did you know that our toes play a very important role in how we maintain balance and anchor during dynamic movement? My name is Dr. Amelie Spickle, functional podiatrist and human movement specialist.

Now what I'm describing is what's called toe flexor strength. This function of our digits is critical to how we maintain dynamic balance and push off when we run, jump, or change direction.

Now, when I think about toe function, there's a few key things.

Natural Toe Alignment

First is what is natural toe alignment? The proper position for our toes is long, straight, and flat to the ground. Second, is taking advantage of toe flexor strength or this anchoring mechanism, which is the pushing of the digits down into the ground.

Now there's an exercise that I teach that activates the toe-flexors.

Forward Lean Exercise Setup

This is called forward lean. When I teach forward-lean, what I'm going to have you do is bring yourself into a standing position with your feet shoulder-width apart.

I want you to lift your toes, find your foot tripods, you're going underneath the first metatarsal head, fifth metastasal-head heel, spread those toes nice and wide, place them back down onto the floor, and then stand nice and tall.

And I want you to imagine that you were stiff as a board. Staying stiff is a bored, I you want to slightly lean your body forward, and bring it back to a vertical position.

I'm gonna show you from the side. My toes are spread wide, standing nice an tall, then I am gonna slightly leaning forward and bringing it a back vertical.

Demonstrating the Forward Lean

slightly lean forward and bring it back vertical. Now every time you slightly leaned forward, did you feel in your toes that there was a anchoring reflex or response in you toes?

That is essentially activating toe flexion strength. Remember your toe flexors act as an anchor or a stabilizing response against balance and dynamic movement and push off.

So when you're thinking about optimal movement, an optimal foot function, I want you to think of, let's think about the toes.

Toe Anchoring for Dynamic Movement

Let's sing about toe, flexor strength. What is that natural toe alignment? And how do I activate and strengthen my toe? Flexors, which is demonstrated through forward lean.

To learn more about natural foot function and how you can achieve your optimal foot strength, please visit

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